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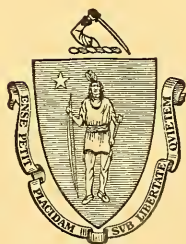
REPORT

1-6
1911-12

OF

THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE FOREST
COMMISSION.

1914.



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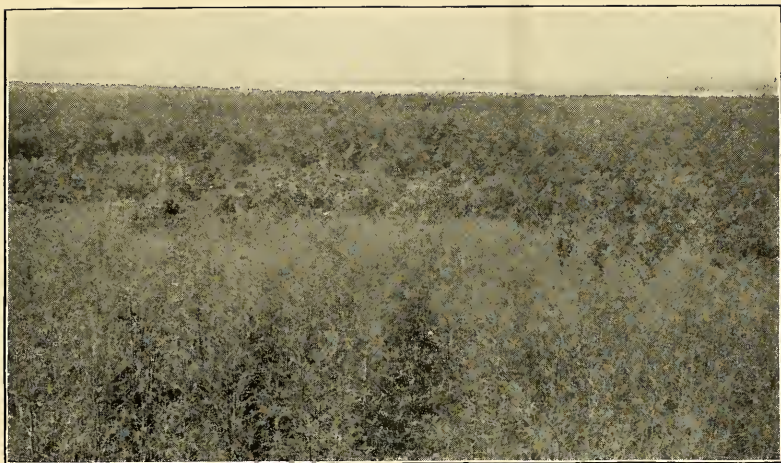
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APPROVED BY
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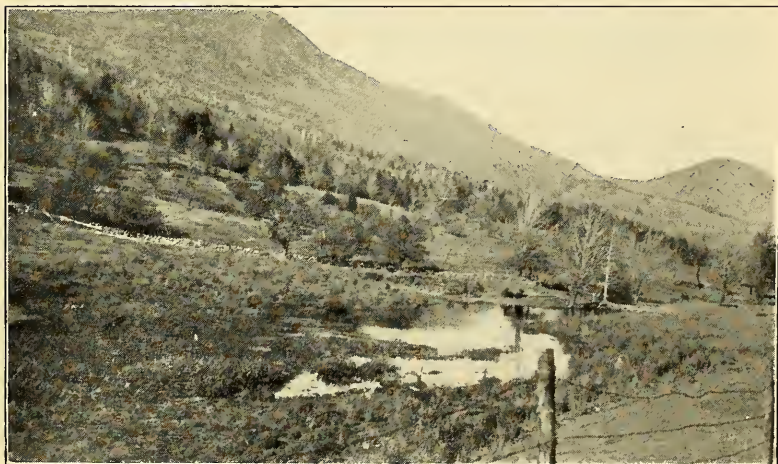
REPORT OF THE STATE FOREST COMMISSION.

The conservation of forests has not interested the American people until a comparatively recent period. The supply of lumber in America has seemed inexhaustible, and it was not until the realization of a possible shortage began to arouse the fears of the more thoughtful that this was brought to anything like a practical consideration. In foreign countries the need of scientifically preserving forests in order that a continuous supply of timber should be secured as the trees were cut and used has been felt and studied, so that as a necessary consequence the wooded areas used for such purposes should supply new lumber as the well-grown is consumed. This has in a large measure been successfully adjusted in Switzerland, Germany and France, and a practical succession of crops has been attained without extending the forested areas. In order, however, that this happy result should follow, the laws had first to be made and carried out, trained forces developed, and the whole reduced to a scientific system and put into operation. In the countries above referred to the forests, whether owned by the State or by private persons or corporations, are strictly operated under State regulations. A gradual development of public sentiment that something would have to be done in New England has taken place, as was inevitable. We have seen, and now fully realize, that the vast areas of forests producing valuable timber have been largely stripped of their productive growth, and the lands so stripped have for the most part grown up to scrub, which is less than valueless. In short, it has by degrees been forced upon our minds that we were fast getting into the condition of having to buy our supply from outside our borders, and that the large territory formerly covered with merchantable lumber and timber was growing up to a worthless covering of scrub oaks, gray birch and other unproductive trees, and that the area of land in this condition was gradually increasing, thereby lessening the amount of arable territory each year. Such conditions appealed to the

minds and understanding of the more thoughtful, — those who really considered the future welfare of the country. It was more and more frequently called to the attention of the public, so that the national government, as well as individual States, has taken action, and appointed commissions and others authorized and charged to recommend improved methods of lumbering and conservation of woodlands both by law and by advice. In various States laws have been enacted which tend, in more or less effective ways, toward securing better results. The Commission on the Taxation of Wild and Forest Lands, created by the Legislature of 1913, made a very careful and exhaustive study of conditions in every State in the Union where anything had been done, and in foreign countries, and examined the laws governing them. It also studied the reports and dissertations of various individuals and bodies. It deduced certain conclusions and recommended two legislative acts as a result. It should be realized that deductions reached after the most careful study with the advice of many recognized authorities, and with the invaluable knowledge and experience of Professor Bullock of Harvard University and Mr. Trefry, Commissioner of Corporations, both members of that commission, must be accepted as embodying the wisdom and experience of those who have preceded us. One of the acts of the Massachusetts Legislature related entirely to the encouragement of small woodlot owners toward the improvement of such lots and the development of improved growths thereon. The other authorized the appointment of the Massachusetts State Forest Commission, the purpose of which is to replace in as large a measure as is practicable the wild, unproductive areas which in round numbers comprise approximately 1,000,000 acres in this territorially small State, with forested areas which would on their maturity have a commercial value. It is the part of this commission to purchase or otherwise acquire this wild land, and to gradually supplant the worthless by a valuable growth under the immediate supervision of the State Forester. Objection has been raised to the acquisition of large areas for this purpose by the State as socialistic, and persons have appeared who maintained that it is no part of the Commonwealth to do what private enterprise should undertake. The answer to such argument manifestly is that no person or



View from the new fire tower at Fall River. Burned-over section in foreground, city of Fall River in the distance.



North slopes of Mount Greylock. Steep mountain slopes require the protection of a forest cover.

corporation will to any large extent assume to do what will have so remote a return, and meantime large portions of the State are unused, — producing nothing, — and, like bad associates, are continually extending their evil influences. The further and sufficing answer is that by such public methods we are securing a commodity in our midst which otherwise we must import, at least in a very large degree, and at the same time are setting a practical example for others to follow. It is believed that in adopting this policy of creating State forests and maintaining them financially the State will realize in the end vastly more than the cost and the interest thereon.

It is not pertinent to review in this report the laws or regulations of other States or countries, but it may be well to state that the neighboring State of New York has acquired upwards of 4,000,000 acres of its territory as State forest lands.

The purposes of forestry are to secure the succession of commercial trees and to insure the protection of the soil and the regulation of water flow. The adoption of a State forest policy by Massachusetts may be deemed the first direct effort to apply reasonable foresight in the handling of what is properly termed one of our greatest natural resources.

During the last decade notable progress has been made by the State Forester's department, working under the so-called reforestation act. The demonstration plots that have been planted in many sections of the State have been instructive, and have stimulated the interest of the public in the forestry movement to a very appreciable extent.

A copy of the act establishing the State Forest Commission is inserted: —

ACTS OF 1914, CHAPTER 720.

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A STATE FOREST COMMISSION AND TO PROVIDE FOR
THE PURCHASE OF LANDS FOR STATE FORESTS.

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:

SECTION 1. There is hereby established a state forest commission, to be composed of three persons, one of whom shall be the state forester and two other members who shall be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the council, and who shall serve without compensation. The term of office of the appointive members of the commission shall be six years, except that when first appointed one of the members shall be appointed for six years and one for three years. Thereafter one member shall be appointed every third year.

SECTION 2. The commission shall have power to acquire for the commonwealth by purchase or otherwise, and to hold, woodland or land suitable for timber cultivation within the commonwealth. The commission may, after a public hearing, sell or exchange any land thus acquired which in the judgment of the commission can no longer be used advantageously for the purposes of this act. The average cost of land purchased by the commission shall not exceed five dollars an acre.

SECTION 3. Lands acquired under the provisions of this act shall be known as state forests and shall be under the control and management of the state forester. He shall proceed to re-forest and develop such lands and shall have power to make all reasonable regulations which in his opinion will tend to increase the public enjoyment and benefit therefrom and to protect and conserve the water supplies of the commonwealth. The state forester shall keep and shall publish in his annual report an account of all money invested in each state forest and of the annual income and expense thereof.

SECTION 4. In the reforestation, maintenance, and development of lands purchased under this act, the state forester, so far as it is practicable, shall obtain the labor necessary therefor under the provisions of chapter six hundred and thirty-three of the acts of the year nineteen hundred and thirteen, and acts in amendment thereof and in addition thereto.

SECTION 5. Land acquired under the provisions of this act shall be exempt from taxation; but the commonwealth shall reimburse cities and towns in which such lands are situated for taxes lost by reason of their acquisition, in the same manner and to the same extent as in the case of lands acquired for public institutions under the provisions of chapter six hundred and seven of the acts of the year nineteen hundred and ten.

SECTION 6. The sum of ten thousand dollars may be expended during the present year and the sum of twenty thousand dollars may be expended annually for the four succeeding years by the state forest commission in the acquisition of lands under the provisions of this act: *provided*, that the said commission may, at its discretion, authorize the state forester to expend a part of said sum in the maintenance of said lands. If any part of said twenty thousand dollars remains unexpended at the close of any year, the balance may be expended in the following year. The said commission may also expend not more than five hundred dollars annually for its necessary expenses incurred in carrying out the provisions of this act.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon its passage. [*Approved June 29, 1914.*]

In pursuance of the provisions of the above act, approved by the Governor on June 29, 1914, Governor Walsh appointed as members of the commission Harold Parker of Lancaster and Harvey N. Shepard of Boston, the third member being Frank W. Rane, the State Forester, as prescribed by the act.



Templeton town lot. This view was taken twelve years after wood was cut off, and shows a valueless growth of gray birch. This kind of land should be replanted to pine.



View of Montague Plains. Extensive sand plains, capable of producing pine stands under proper forest management.

On September 16 the commission met and organized, with the choice of Harold Parker as chairman. Charles O. Bailey was elected secretary of the commission. This meeting was held at the office of the State Forester, 6 Beacon Street, at which place all meetings of the commission have been held up to the present time.

For the purpose of obtaining information relative to available lands, on October 7 a circular letter was sent by the commission to the mayors of cities, chairmen of boards of selectmen of towns, and forest wardens throughout the State, which read as follows:—

The State Forest Commission, created by chapter 720, Acts of 1914, has recently organized, with headquarters at 6 Beacon Street, Boston. The duty of this commission, as defined by the act, is the acquisition of wild and waste lands situated within the Commonwealth for the purpose of converting them into State forests. Believing that there is no question of greater economic importance in its relation to the future development and prosperity of the State than forestry, the commission earnestly solicits the co-operation of all citizens in its efforts to consummate this commendable endeavor of Massachusetts along the lines of conservation.

It is without doubt a fact that a great majority of the towns in the State contain many acres of land unsuited for agricultural purposes. It is the acquisition of land of this type with which the commission is charged, and in order to obtain definite information with regard to the distribution and possibility of acquiring land, the commission is causing copies of this letter to be sent to the selectmen and forest wardens of towns throughout the State. Confident that most of our town officials will readily appreciate the advantages of having established near them a State forest, both from an economic and an æsthetic standpoint, the commission hopes to find a ready response to this request for information.

In the discharge of its duty, the commission will endeavor to keep in mind two objects:—

First.—As State forests are intended to serve as an object-lesson to educate landowners to a realization of their opportunities, the geographical location of the forests will be carefully studied by the commission. It is their purpose to establish them at such points in the State as will make them accessible to as large a number of our citizens as possible.

Second.—The cost of land will of necessity be a determining factor in locating the forests, as section 2 of the act restricts the average cost of land purchased by the commission to a price not exceeding \$5 per acre. At the present time the commission has decided not to consider any proposition that would involve the purchase of less than 1,000 acres in one tract.

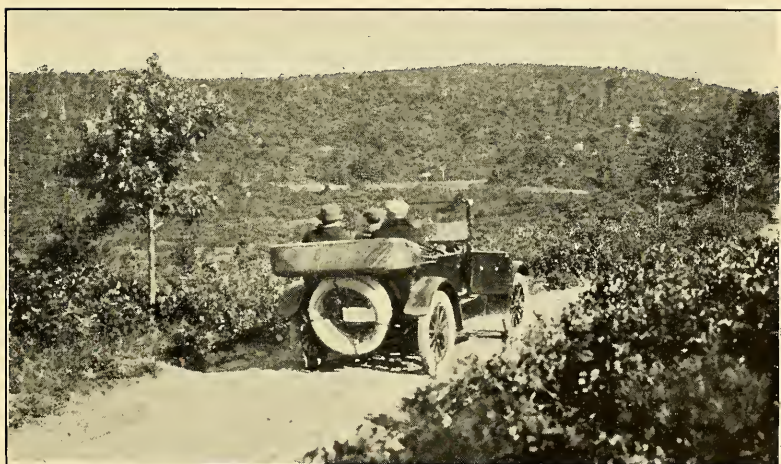
If, in your opinion, such a tract may be acquired in your vicinity, even though it may be situated in one or more adjoining towns, the commission would appreciate the information.

The responses to the above letter were numerous, and while a large majority reported that no land of the type asked for by the commission was obtainable in their respective regions, several reports indicated the possibility of acquiring just such tracts as would meet the requirements of the commission. Most of the latter reports came from the Cape Cod country and the extreme western part of the State.

Between August and the end of the year the commission made several extended tours of observation from Cape Cod to the New York State line, with the result that tentative locations for the formation of State forests were determined on. In the district south and southeast of Boston, particularly in Plymouth and on the Cape proper, large areas exist where the original growth has been removed and the unused lands have been allowed to grow up to scrub oaks, etc., which have been subsequently burned over once or more. These lands are to all intents and purposes valueless. Many acres of them have been permitted to revert to town ownership by neglect on the part of the recorded owners to pay taxes on a merely nominal valuation. Many still remain in the name of the original grantees. A large portion of this territory can be acquired as State forests at a small cost. It is the purpose of the commission to secure a considerable part of this absolutely worthless land, and by degrees to replace the present covering with merchantable lumber, and to transform a non-productive part of the State into one which will render a net revenue to the State. As has been said, there are about 1,000,000 acres of practically waste lands in Massachusetts. These lands are distributed over the State more or less evenly. The largest percentage of unproductive territory, taking the whole area in each locality, is on Cape Cod and adjoining regions. It is, however, entirely true that there is no considerable part of the State which does not contain an undue proportion of unproductive land. The commission has, therefore, examined lands bordering on the metropolitan water tracts and adjacent thereto in Sudbury, West Boylston and Princeton; also in Winchendon, Royalston and adjoining regions, —



Scrub growth on burned-over area, Cape Cod. This growth is of no value, but the land could be made productive by replanting to pine and furnishing adequate protection from fire.



View of Pine Knob in town of Bourne, showing effect of fires and neglect. Typical Cape Cod inland territory.

an excellent white pine country; in various places in Norfolk county; in the wild country bordering on the Millers River and tributary streams; in the northern parts of Franklin and Berkshire counties; and in the central portion of Hampshire county.

Bristol and Essex counties, on account of lack of time, have not been considered up to the issuance of this report. The commission has examined the woodlands bordering on the Mohawk trail as comprising two essential considerations, viz.: the preservation of the beautiful trees growing along the new road over Florida Mountain, recently built at the expense of the State and intended as a part of the State highway system, and also the surrounding region, because it is exactly the sort of country that should be included in a State forest.

The plan of the commission, acting under the law and the understood purposes that led to the formulation of the law, is to acquire waste lands distributed over the entire State as rapidly as is practicable, and to put them into condition for the development of properly organized forests. A reference to the accompanying map will show where the first proposed areas are located. Negotiations for the acquisition of several of these areas are now under way. It is not considered that any lands shall be taken at present unless at least 1,000 acres can be secured together.

The experience of the commission so far has led it to the conviction that certain additions or amendments to the act creating the commission should be authorized by the Legislature. It has been manifest during the tours of the commission that an interest on the part of landowners exists, and a desire to co-operate with the commission in its efforts to acquire land under the provisions of the law; but it has also been made apparent that one or more small owners might block the location of a State forest in a given locality by unwillingness to sell. It is also certain that in certain places no good title could be secured unless the commission had the right to acquire land by the right of eminent domain. This right is asked only in such manner as is given to the Metropolitan Park Commission and to the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation Commission.

Under the act this commission has no authority to secure quarters for an office or place to hold its meetings, or to pay for the services of a secretary or clerk. It therefore also asks to be given the authority to use a portion of the appropriation for such purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE FOREST COMMISSION.

First. — The enactment of legislation which would enable the commission to acquire land by the right of eminent domain.

Second. — That the commission be allowed to expend out of its annual appropriation the amount necessary to secure a suitable office in which to hold its meetings and to pay for the services of a secretary or clerk and for such other clerical services as may be necessary.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

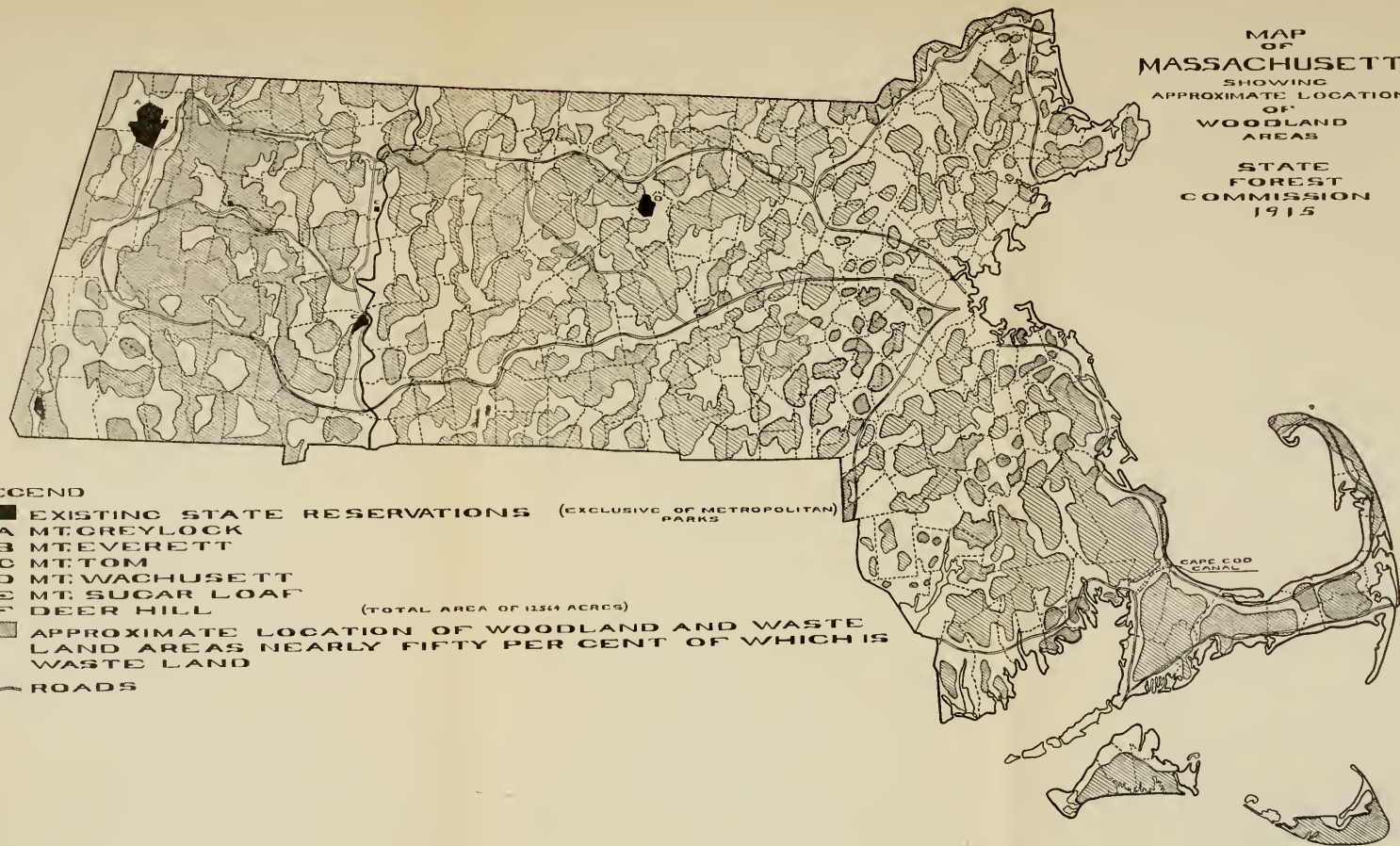
Appropriation for expenses, 1914,	\$500 00
Expenditures: —	
Travel,	\$208 57
Office supplies,	7 65
Stationery and postage,	38 00
Map,	25 00
	<hr/>
	279 22
	<hr/>
Balance returned to treasury Nov. 30, 1914,	\$220 78

HAROLD PARKER,
HARVEY N. SHEPARD,
FRANK W. RANE,

State Forest Commission.

MAP
OF
MASSACHUSETTS
SHOWING
APPROXIMATE LOCATION
OF
WOODLAND
AREAS

STATE
FOREST
COMMISSION
1915



LEGEND

■ EXISTING STATE RESERVATIONS (EXCLUSIVE OF METROPOLITAN PARKS)

A MT. GREYLOCK

B MT. EVERETT

C MT. TOM

D MT. WACHUSETT

E MT. SUGAR LOAF

F DEER HILL

(TOTAL AREA OF 12344 ACRES)

■ APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF WOODLAND AND WASTE
LAND AREAS NEARLY FIFTY PER CENT OF WHICH IS
WASTE LAND

— ROADS